



Ironton District Volunteers Contribute 1778 Hours valued at \$44,450

Volunteers on the Ironton pull out the stops in 2007 to contribute 1,778 hours of work. The work accomplished added a value of \$44,450 to the Botany and Wildlife programs.



Volunteers from Rock Hill Envirothon Team help transplant seedling for butterfly garden.

During FY07, volunteers assisted the botany and wildlife programs on the Ironton District of the Wayne National Forest with a variety of projects. Volunteers transplanted native plant seedlings, planted butterfly gardens, controlled invasive species, placed discarded Christmas trees in Lake Vesuvius for aquatic habitat, surveyed for rare and endangered plants and animals, assisted with the Wheelin' Sportsmen Event and the Lake Vesuvius Kid's Fishing Derby, and helped out with many other projects. Here are a few of the highlights of this

year's volunteer accomplishments:

Mary Bowen, a local high school student, volunteered over 300 hours. "Mary helped us gather data to study the aftermath of the 2003 ice storm." said Assistant District Ranger, Chad Fitton. Mary helped establish over 40 Firemon plots which will be used to track changes in forest vegetation and fuels over time. "I thought it would be a good experience and I really like the work," she said. Mary would like to major in Environmental Studies in college and study global warming.

Jake Emnett started volunteering with the District in February. He designed a pollinator garden that was later planted by volunteers at the District Office.

Jake also surveyed for herptiles, mapped invasive species, built a dozen funnel traps for amphibian sampling, and researched the kinds of pollinators that would use the garden he planned. He discovered that there are 57 species of pollinators that could use the plants in the native plant garden. Jake contributed over 202 hours of time to the botany and wildlife programs.

Emnett and District Botanist, Chad Kirschbaum received help from several organizations in creating the office butterfly garden. The West Virginia Native Plant Society, the Rock Hill Garden Club, the Lawrence County Copper Heads 4-H Club, the Rock Hill High School Envirothon Team, the Ironton Master Gardens and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints all had members that participated in establishing the garden. Lowes of Russel, Kentucky also donated materials for the office garden and another pollinator garden which will be located at Rock Hill High School. "The butterfly garden projects should increase community awareness of pollinator declines and the importance of pollinator conservation" commented Emnett.

Brandon Black, a student at Hocking College, is completing an 80-hour volunteer internship as part of his degree program. During his time as a volunteer on the Wayne, Brandon has assisted with a wide range of management and inventory projects, including pond dam maintenance, wetland restoration, surveying for herptiles, treating non-native invasive species, and inventorying hardwood forest stands. Other volunteer projects to improve habitat include work done by the South Webster, Ohio Boy Scout troop, which built and installed approximately 20 bluebird boxes to improve habitat for cavity nesting birds.

The Lake Vesuvius Kid's Fishing Derby was held in June for the first time since Lake Vesuvius was drained several years ago. The success of this event, which drew approximately 300 participants, was due in large part to the volunteers from the Lawrence County Bass Club, Izaak Walton League, and Ironton Kiwanis, who gathered donations, cooked food, baited hooks, weighed fish, and ran the casting contest. Volunteers from the National Wild Turkey Federation, Lawrence County Bass Club, and Izaak Walton League also helped staff the Wheelin' Sportsmen event this spring, which drew approximately 200 people to Lake Vesuvius.

Another important project that was started this summer was research on how the invasive species, Tree-of-Heaven, affects soil and understory vegetation. Gerald (Trey) Scott, who is a graduate student at Ohio University, spent over 500 hours on the District, setting up plots, measuring vegetation, collecting soil samples and experimentally treating plots with herbicide. "I hope this study will add to the growing body of literature that shows how invasive species are changing the environment and gives land

managers hope that treating these invasive species can restore habitat to healthy conditions."

Volunteers were also helping to control invasive species on the District. Five members of the Hanging Rock ATV Club, along with president, Jerry Gammon, helped pull garlic mustard along a section of proposed ATV trail. Twelve volunteers helped control garlic mustard on a 36 acre flood plain at Little Storms Creek Special Area. Another twelve volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints cut Asiatic stiltgrass in the Vesuvius Recreation Area.

"Volunteers are a critical part of our Natural Resources team" notes Kari Kirschbaum, District Wildlife Biologist. "Without the assistance of volunteers and partners, we wouldn't have been able to accomplish many of the projects we completed this year."

Note: This story was a collaborative effort by Chad and Kari Kirschbaum

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